

Assessment Standards
For
Missouri Public Schools
(Word Document Available via the Web)

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Robert E. Bartman, Commissioner
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Reasons For An Assessment Program

In a policy statement, adopted April 27, 1995, Missouri's State Board of Education designated the purposes of the assessment program as:

- improving students' acquisition of important knowledge, skills, and competencies;
- monitoring the performance of Missouri's educational system;
- empowering students and their families to improve their educational prospects; and
- supporting the teaching and learning process.

An assessment system serves these purposes by supplying data that can be used to make more informed educational judgments and decisions concerning individual students, groups of students, and educational programs. The effectiveness of an assessment program depends on the wise choice of assessment methods, appropriate administration procedures and accurate interpretation of results. There are three major uses of assessment results: instructional, guidance and counseling, and administrative.

INSTRUCTIONAL USES

Information obtained through assessment may be used to review and improve both student performance and the content and process of instruction. Achievement test results can assist teachers in monitoring individual student learning and in identifying specific strengths and weaknesses in classroom curriculum and instruction. The use of assessment results to appraise the necessity for reteaching and to guide instructional reorganization should assist educators in making instruction more effective for each student.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING USES

Assessment information can be used by students, parents, and advisors or counselors to make cooperative decisions about students' personal and educational choices. Information from assessments should be combined with other relevant information to help a student:

- understand his or her achievement and academic needs;
- plan a school program of studies;
- make vocational and career decisions;
- plan for college or advanced training; and
- make wise personal decisions.

ADMINISTRATIVE USES

Individual student results may be used in combination with other information to help screen and select students for participation in certain school programs (for example, special education, compensatory education, or gifted education).

Information about the test performance of students in a building or district may be used to inform parents, the school board and the public about the effectiveness of schooling. Analysis of student performance reveals trends that will aid in setting priorities, planning the curriculum, revising instructional practices, and evaluating the progress of educational programs.

Overview of the Missouri Assessment Program

In response to the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993, Senate Bill 380 (Appendix A), the State Board of Education directed the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (the Department) to identify the knowledge, skills, and competencies that Missouri students should acquire by the time they complete high school and to assess student progress toward those academic standards. The Department worked with teachers, school administrators, parents, and business professionals from throughout the state, first to craft the standards and later to develop means by which to assess them.

THE SHOW-ME STANDARDS

The Show-Me Standards (Appendix B) depart from the “Key Skills” established by the Excellence in Education Act of 1985 by requiring students not only to acquire knowledge but to be able to communicate and to apply their knowledge in a variety of settings. While the Show-Me Standards do not represent everything a student will or should learn, graduates who meet these standards should be well prepared for further education, work and civic responsibilities.

MISSOURI FRAMEWORKS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum frameworks were mandated by The Outstanding Schools Act to provide guidance to districts in planning curricula designed to ensure that students attain the knowledge, skills and competencies designated by the Show-Me Standards. The curriculum frameworks are not intended to constitute a statewide curriculum. Rather, each provides a model for curriculum development that school districts may choose to use if it fits their local needs. The curriculum frameworks for each of the six content areas include:

- an overview of education in Missouri in that content area;
- a listing of what students should know and be able to do at the elementary, middle and high school levels;
- suggested learning activities to develop pertinent knowledge and skills; and
- discussion of relevant educational issues and practices.

Assessment Annotations for the Curriculum Frameworks show what is “fair game” for assessment in each subject area at the “benchmark” grade levels designated for statewide assessment. Curriculum frameworks and assessment annotations are available through the Department’s Curriculum Services Section at (573) 751-2625 or (573) 751-4608.

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

The **Missouri Assessment Program (MAP)** is designed to reflect both the intentions of legislative reforms (Appendix C) and what educators believe to be best practice in assessment and instruction. The MAP will assess proficiency in mathematics, science, communication arts, and social studies at a statewide level once at each of three grade

levels, elementary, middle, and high school, and will assess health/physical education at grades 5 and 9. Statewide assessment of Fine Arts [grade level(s) not yet determined] and an Alternate Assessment, modified for Special Education students comprising less than 2% of the population, are also planned.

State-level subject area assessments are comprised of three types of items: multiple-choice items, constructed response items and performance events. The Department initially plans to create three equivalent forms of each subject area assessment, to administer one form in each designated grade level per year, and to release some constructed-response items and performance events for schools to use for instructional or local assessment purposes.

Multiple-choice items present students with a question followed by four or five response options, one of which is correct. The advantages of these items are: 1) they are effective in measuring students' breadth of content knowledge; and 2) a large number of these items can be administered and scored in a short amount of time. The major limitation of multiple-choice items is that they do not adequately measure students' ability to apply what they know. The survey portion of TerraNova, a nationally norm-referenced test developed by CTB/McGraw-Hill, will be used as the multiple-choice component of the MAP in mathematics, communication arts, science, and social studies.

Constructed-response items require students to supply (rather than select) an appropriate response. Students might be asked to provide a one-word answer, complete a sentence or show their work in solving a problem. In addition to measuring students' content knowledge, constructed-response items can provide some information about how students arrived at their answers. These items are more time consuming than multiple-choice items to administer and score; however, they provide more information about students' understanding and thinking.

Performance events measure students' knowledge, and their ability to apply that knowledge in problem situations. The performance events used in MAP may require students to work through a complex problem or present a written argument. Depending upon its demands, students might be expected to take up to 45 minutes to complete a performance event. Performance events generally allow for more than one approach to arriving at a correct solution. The advantage of this type of assessment item is that it provides insight into students' ability to apply knowledge and understanding in various situations. The disadvantage is that performance events are time consuming and costly to produce, administer, and score.

TIMELINE FOR PHASING IN THE STATE ASSESSMENT

The mathematics portion of the MAP was available for district use in the spring of 1997 and will be required in the spring of 1998. Assessments in other content areas are being phased in as they are developed. Each subject area assessment will be available

to school districts on a voluntary basis in the first year of its administration. Districts will be required to administer each assessment in the second and subsequent years. The complete state assessment package should be fully implemented by the spring of 2001. Teachers will administer the MAP at designated grade levels each spring. The testing window is the same for all subject areas.

The proposed timeline and grade levels for statewide testing is as follows:

Subject	Field Test*	Assessment Available	Assessment Required	Grades Tested
Mathematics	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Spring 1998	4, 8, 10
Communication Arts	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Spring 1999	3, 7, 11
Science	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Spring 1999	3, 7, 10
Social Studies	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Spring 2000	4, 8, 11
Health/Physical Education	Fall 1999	Spring 2000	Spring 2001	5, 9
Fine Arts	Fall 1999	Spring 2000	Spring 2001	**
Alternate for special needs students	1998/1999	1999/2000	2000/2001	***

*Field tests are conducted in order to refine the final instrument for statewide use. Districts do not receive field test results.

** to be determined

*** The Alternate is designed for students whose cognitive impairment precludes participation in subject area assessments. When students take the Alternate will be determined by age rather than by grade level.

INCLUSION IN THE STATE ASSESSMENT

Local school districts will account for all students enrolled in their school district at the time of the MAP administration. This accounting is accomplished by reporting all enrolled students in one of the following categories:

- participating in the MAP or, if appropriate, a portion of the MAP under standard conditions;
- participating in the MAP or, if appropriate, a portion of the MAP with accommodations that have been approved by DESE for the specific content area being assessed;
- participating in an Alternate Assessment based upon the Show-Me Standards; and
- not participating in MAP or the Alternate Assessment due to extended absence from school or exemption based upon consideration of the student's LEP or IEP.

All enrolled students in designated grade levels - except those whose Individual Education Program (IEP) or whose level of English proficiency indicates that such testing is not appropriate - will, where possible, participate in the MAP, either under standard testing conditions or with accommodations.

Decisions about whether student with disabilities as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) should participate in MAP assessments should be made by an

IEP team annually, based on the goals of that student's instruction. Students with disabilities whose instructional goals are expected to lead to typical work and life experiences should participate in all subject areas in which they are receiving instruction in the related content-oriented Show-Me Standards. Students whose IEP team determines he/she cannot participate in MAP subject area assessments will be assessed by means of an alternate assessment. Decisions about participation should not be based on program setting, category of disability, or percentage of time in the regular classroom. Reasons for exclusion from MAP testing must be documented in the IEP.

The MAP should be administered to students whose first language is not English and whose proficiency in English is limited (LEP) as soon as it is determined that doing so will provide instructionally useful information. Documentation justifying district decisions made regarding the testing or non-testing of LEP students must be kept in their students' permanent files. Students will be required to participate in the MAP assessment after being in one or more Missouri schools for more than one calendar year, unless their level of English proficiency precludes participation. Once students have been exempted from one or more MAP assessments in a given year, those students may not be exempted from any MAP assessment in subsequent years. Information regarding the determination of whether to exempt LEP students can be obtained from the Federal Grants Management Section at (573) 751-3468.

SCORING THE STATE ASSESSMENT

Several methods are used to score the different components of the state assessment. Multiple-choice items are machine scored. To ensure that the state assessments are scored quickly and that results are returned to districts in a reasonable amount of time, constructed-response items and performance events are hand scored by professional item readers. Uniformity of scoring is ensured by rigorous training and the use of item-specific scoring guides. Scoring is organized and conducted by Missouri's contractor CTB/McGraw-Hill. The Department will monitor the reliability and validity of each subject area scoring by organizing groups of Missouri teachers to re-score a representative sample of student responses.

REPORTING

Districts will have individual student, classroom, building, and district-level results by mid-August, following the administration of the assessment. A report of state results will be released after the start of the school year.

The Individual Student Report will describe the performance of a single student on the MAP. This report will provide the student's overall achievement in a subject area, and an indicator of the student's performance on each assessed content standard relative to the performance of proficient students' performance on that standard. When MAP is fully implemented, the Individual Student Report will also combine information from several subject area assessments to provide the student's performance on the process standards. A national percentile rank on the TerraNova Survey that allows the student's

performance to be compared to the performance of other students nationwide, is also provided.

The Improving America's Schools Act (see page 16) requires that assessment results be disaggregated by gender, by each major racial and ethnic group, by English proficiency status, by students with disabilities, and by economically disadvantaged students. In accordance with Missouri law, all assessment data identifying individual students will be confidential. Group data reported at the classroom, building, district, and state will be available to the general public.

Questions regarding assessment formats, timelines, administration, scoring, reporting, or assessment in general should be directed to the Department's Assessment Section at (800) 845-3545.

USE OF THE MISSOURI ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Districts are expected to use MAP results, **in conjunction with other indicators**, to appraise and strengthen their educational programs. Decisions regarding criteria for grade promotion, graduation, and the format of report cards will continue to be made at the district level.

The Outstanding Schools Act calls for the development of procedures to identify "exemplary" or "academically deficient" schools. Any school that meets the criteria for "exemplary levels" of student achievement for three successive years may request from the commissioner, a waiver of rules and regulations in order to promote flexibility in the operations of the school and to enhance and encourage efficiency in the delivery of instructional services. Any school being considered for the academically deficient rating shall be examined by an audit team to determine the cause of the school's poor performance. If warranted, a management team will identify methods for improvement.

At least one of the criteria used to identify each type of school will relate to student achievement on the MAP. The Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) may begin using MAP results to determine district academic performance as soon as districts have two years of MAP data. To obtain full credit in the current accreditation program, districts will be expected to perform at a consistently high level, or to show improvement over time. Districts may choose to initiate steps toward student accountability on the MAP in ways that are consistent with current local and state policy. Questions regarding the Missouri School Improvement Program should be addressed to the Department's Supervision Section at (573) 751-3190 or (573) 526-3822.

III

General Assessment Requirements

To meet the requirements of the Missouri School Improvement Program and the Outstanding Schools Act, public school districts shall develop an assessment program that provides, as a minimum, the assessment services and activities described in this section. **Additional screening and assessment above the minimum program may be needed for decision-making purposes, and may be required for students involved in some state and federal programs.**

ASSESSMENT PLANS

District assessment programs shall include a comprehensive, board-approved, written plan which district personnel should follow when assessing all students preschool through 12th grade. The assessment program must be approved by the local school board and must be available for review by representatives of the Department upon request and by the Missouri School Improvement Program team at the time of the district's review. Each district's assessment program shall include, at a minimum:

1. state-level assessments in accord with timeline and grade levels shown in Section II.
Off-grade assessment of Show-Me Standards assessed at the state level is not required. It is likely, however, that districts will find off-grade assessments desirable in order to track student progress, to inform instructional and administrative decisions, to aid counseling, and to prepare students for state-level assessments.
2. a comprehensive strategy for locally assessing student progress on those Show-Me Standards which are not assessed at the state level. Districts may choose among a variety of means at their disposal to assess student performance on those Show-Me Standards not assessed by the MAP. They may, for example, use methods such as portfolios, student demonstrations, commercial assessments, and extended performance tasks that are not practical at a state level. Districts need not coordinate the timing of these assessments with state-level assessments. It is not planned that results of district-level assessments will be integrated into state-level results.
3. provision for assessing (at both the state and local level) special populations including students with disabilities who are eligible to receive special education services, students whose first language is not English, migrant students, and gifted and talented students. Districts are accountable for assessment of all students other than those who may be exempted, as specified by Department guidelines.

In addition to the above, each district's written plan shall include:

- the names of assessments to be used at each grade level and the purposes for administering each test or assessment procedure;
- documentation of how the local assessment program assesses students' proficiency in each locally assessed standard, enabling teachers to evaluate students' actual academic performance;
- development procedures for any locally developed test;
- the name or position of the staff member responsible for coordinating the assessment program;
- the position of the person expected to administer each assessment (for example, homeroom teacher, first-hour teacher);
- a written testing calendar that includes the dates on (or windows within) which specific tests will be given;
- a description of how assessment results will be used and disseminated;
- provisions for in-service training of staff regarding assessment-related issues;
- provisions for all students to learn pertinent test-taking skills;
- a policy to ensure test security; and
- provisions for the identification of areas for instructional improvement

TEST SECURITY

Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) tests are secure materials. Districts must develop sound security procedures to protect the integrity of test results. School personnel responsible for MAP testing must ensure that all test materials are secure at all times. No testing materials may be copied, duplicated, or made accessible to personnel not responsible for testing. When not in use, test books and answer sheets must be kept in a locked room or cabinet in the school building to prevent unauthorized access. After test administration, all test booklets, used and unused, must be returned to the district's test coordinator.

School personnel responsible for the district assessment program shall develop a written, board-approved test security policy which meets the needs of the district and ensures maximum test security. This policy must include:

- names or positions of persons who will have access to MAP tests;
- specification of storage areas for test materials before and after test administration;
- instructions for personnel who are to administer MAP tests;
- a list of actions the district considers to be inappropriate;
- sanctions against inappropriate actions; and
- careful accounting procedures for all MAP material.

The procedures and security measures outlined in this document should help prevent unfair practices (such as, any practice that results in scores that reflect more or less than is warranted by knowledge and competency of the student(s) taking the assessment). However, should breeches of security or conduct occur, the Department should be notified and appropriate sanctions invoked.

TEST ADMINISTRATION

MAP testing will adhere to all procedures described in the Test Coordinator's Manual and the Examiner's Manual that accompany MAP assessments. Students should be tested under conditions that enable them to perform to the best of their ability. For example, it is recommended that the three sessions that comprise each assessment be administered over two to three days. The school should provide an appropriate testing environment, reasonably free of distractions and impediments. All students should be provided the opportunity to learn test-taking skills. Documentation should be maintained showing that students have had this opportunity.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The statutory language of the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require students with disabilities to be included in statewide and district assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations where necessary. Accommodations are designed to

provide all students with an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do. Accommodation procedures include adjustments in:

- the assessment setting (for example, testing individually or in a small group);
- how items are presented (for example, oral reading of assessment);
- how students are required to respond (for example, dictation to a scribe);
- timing of the assessment (for example, more frequent breaks during testing);

Permissible accommodations for students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and Individual Accommodation Plans (IAPs) are listed in the Examiner's Manual that accompanies assessments for each subject area.

IN-SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Each district shall provide in-service training to its educational staff to ensure skilled administration of tests in an appropriate testing environment, coordination of the testing program, effective teaching of test-taking skills, and appropriate use of test results in improving individual and group instruction at all grade levels. **Districts should recognize that student performance on the MAP is the responsibility of all professional staff, not only teachers of grade levels at which the MAP is administered.** Documentation should be maintained showing that targeted professional development activities have been provided. Information regarding assessment and related training opportunities is available from Regional Professional Development Centers and Regional MAP offices.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Public school districts are required to evaluate their educational programs in all instructional areas for all student populations at all levels. At least annually, the local board of education will review test results, including longitudinal student performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs and to make decisions regarding changes in instructional material, instructional strategies, resource allocations, and curricula. (Requirements for disaggregation of performance data are given in the Missouri School Improvement Program Standards and Indicators Manual available from the Department's Supervision Section at (573) 751-4426.

DISSEMINATION OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Each school district shall regularly inform students, parents, other constituents and the general public about its assessment program. Information shall include the purposes for which assessments are administered, test dates, groups of students tested, the results of testing (group achievement test data), changes in scores from previous years, and plans for utilizing test results to improve instruction. Teachers shall be given the results of tests and shall be provided assistance in interpreting these results.

IV

Grade Level Testing Requirements

Preschool: The Early Childhood Development Act (Senate Bill 658) authorizes state funding for preschool screening. School districts shall offer developmental screening to eligible children, ages 1 through entrance into kindergarten in the areas of general development, language, hearing, vision, and physical development. Family participation is voluntary and free to parents.

The Early Childhood Development Act Program Guidelines and Administration Manual, available from the Department's Early Childhood Section at (573) 751-2095, contains specific requirements and suggestions for preschool screening. Manuals are also available which provide school personnel with specific information regarding screening in the areas of vision, hearing, and physical development.

Kindergarten: The Department recommends that districts conduct a kindergarten screen prior to or during the first two weeks of kindergarten as a part of the Special Needs Assessment. (See page 14.)

Kindergarten: No assessment required.

Grade 1:	No assessment required (see Title I requirements, page 15).
Grade 2:	No assessment required.
Grade 3:	Science and communication arts MAP Assessments required.
Grade 4:	Mathematics and social studies MAP Assessments required.
Grade 5:	Health/physical education MAP Assessment required.
Grade 6:	No assessment required.
Grade 7:	Science and communication arts MAP Assessments required.
Grade 8:	Mathematics and social studies MAP Assessments required.
Grade 9:	Health/physical education MAP Assessment required.
Grade 10:	Mathematics and science MAP Assessments required.
Grade 11:	Communication arts and social studies MAP Assessments required.
Grade 12:	No assessment required.

The grade level(s) for assessment of the Fine Arts have not yet been determined.

Scholastic Aptitude Battery: At grades 10, 11 and 12 each student shall be informed of and assisted in registering for and taking scholastic aptitude batteries such as the PSAT, SAT, PACT and ACT as appropriate for individual student needs and choice of college. Results should be combined with other information to assist in the provision of educational and vocational guidance and counseling.

Career Assessment and Career Interest Inventory: At least once in grades 7 or 8 and in grades 10 or 11 students should have the opportunity and be encouraged to complete a career assessment or career interest inventory to provide information with which to systematically develop a 4 to 6 year educational plan. All students should complete a career assessment or career inventory in order to effectively plan short-range and long-range educational/career paths.

Vocational Interest Inventory and Vocational Aptitude Battery: At least once in grades 7-10, but no later than the beginning of grade 10, all students should have the opportunity and be encouraged to complete a vocational interest inventory and a vocational aptitude battery.

The results of career assessments, career interest inventories, vocational interest inventories and vocational aptitude batteries should be used in combination with other information in the development of long-range career plans. Districts are encouraged to continue the administration of career assessments and vocational aptitude batteries, as necessary, to meet the educational and career planning needs of students.

As an alternative to standardized testing, districts may provide a comprehensive career awareness, career exploration, and career planning program, K-12, to assist students in determining early career interests and planning appropriate courses of study. Districts using such a program must ensure that all students have access to the program and are encouraged to participate.

Funds are available through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act of 1990 (P.L.101-392) for districts serving special population students in vocational education programs. Districts receiving such funds must assess the interests, abilities, and special needs of each student served in order to formulate a realistic, individualized vocational plan. Ideally, assessment should be conducted the year prior to students' placement into a vocational program. Special population students often require extensive vocational assessment to fairly and accurately evaluate their level of functioning. Districts may use Carl D. Perkins funds to assist them in providing comprehensive evaluation services.

For specific information concerning vocational assessments and the requirements of the Carl D. Perkins Act, contact the Department's Vocational Special Needs and Guidance Services Section at (573) 751-1394.

V

Special Needs Assessments

The Missouri School Improvement Program and, in some cases, federal or state statutes require districts to develop systematic means to identify and assess the educational needs of the following groups:

- qualified individuals with disabilities under Section 504;
- children with disabilities under IDEA;
- students whose native or home language is other than English;
- gifted/talented students;
- educationally disadvantaged students;
- students with reading difficulties;
- students at risk of educational failure;
- migratory children; and
- homeless children.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES UNDER SECTION 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides that qualified individuals with disabilities cannot by reason of their disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The term program or activity includes all

programs or activities of the Department and all school districts receiving federal funds regardless of whether the specific program or activity involved is a direct recipient of federal funds. A person is considered disabled under section 504 if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record or history of such an impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment.

Section 504 is much broader than the IDEA: there is no categorical listing of disabling conditions. However, if a child is IDEA eligible, he or she will also be protected under Section 504. The regulations also make clear that certain conditions, such as drug or alcohol addiction, heart disease, etc., which would not qualify a child under the IDEA, may be disabling conditions under Section 504. Examples of other potentially disabling conditions under Section 504 are: communicable diseases, temporary disabling conditions, attention deficit disorder (ADD) chronic asthma and severe allergies, physical impairments such as spinal bifida, and diabetes. Further information regarding Section 504 is available from the Office of Civil Rights at (816) 880-4200.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AS DEFINED BY IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires all children, ages birth-21, be screened to identify potential problems in vision, hearing, health/motor skills, cognition (including adaptive behavior), academic achievement (pre-academic for pre-kindergarten, transition/vocational for older students), speech/language, and social/emotional/behavioral development. Assessment information obtained for instructional or guidance and counseling purposes should be considered in addressing these areas.

Review of screening data can assist the district in the identification of students who are in need of more in-depth, problem-specific assessment. Broad spectrum screenings are not considered appropriate for diagnosing disabling conditions or determining placement for special education.

Diagnosis of an educational disability and eligibility for special education services should be part of a comprehensive evaluation process which also determines children's educational needs. Questions regarding the identification and diagnosis of students with disabilities and the requirements for reevaluation should be addressed to the Department's Division of Special Education (573) 751-0699.

STUDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Districts are required to identify all students whose first language is not English upon entry into the district. A brief screening questionnaire regarding the student's first language and the language spoken by members of the student's immediate family is the most effective method of identification.

Once a student has been identified as “language minority,” an assessment of the student’s English language proficiency is required. This assessment may be a combination of formal and informal measures, but must address all four areas of language proficiency: reading, writing, speaking and listening. In addition, some measure of the student’s native language proficiency should be obtained. Sources for this information other than testing include teacher observation, family interviews, and prior school records. Students assessed as having English skills below their age appropriate “grade level” are considered “limited English proficient” (LEP).

Determination of appropriate educational services should take into account students’ backgrounds, as well as information gleaned from the above sources. A district’s program for addressing the needs of LEP students must include clear entry and exit criteria tied to students’ ability to access the regular school curriculum. These criteria should be based on 1) formal and informal assessment tools; 2) students’ portfolios; 3) classroom performance; and, 4) interviews with students, their teachers, and their families. Questions regarding the identification, assessment, and instruction of LEP students should be directed to the Department’s Federal Grants Management at (573) 751-3468.

GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS

Gifted students should be identified at all grade levels in order to provide them with suitable differentiated instruction. The student selection process must consist of at least two stages:

1. screening through multiple criteria that, taken together, constitute a bias-free indicator of possible giftedness (for example, MAP and other test scores, class grades, teacher nominations, demonstrated accomplishments, etc.);
2. individual evaluation and selection based on general mental ability; academic achievement; assessments indicating outstanding creativity, reasoning, and problem-solving ability; and documented evidence of exceptional performance in an academic area or another area related to the design of the gifted program.

The Administrative Manual and Guidelines: State-Assisted Program for Gifted Students, available from the Department’s Gifted Education Section of at (573) 751-2453 specifies systematic steps educators should follow in the evaluation and selection of students for placement in a state-assisted program for gifted students.

EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

Title I of the Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994 (IASA) is intended to ensure that all students, though particularly low-income students, reach higher learning goals. Title I services may target specific students or may be used for overall improvement in high poverty schools. To determine eligibility for services for students from pre-kindergarten to grade 12, Title I requires the use of at least two indicators. Districts should choose reliable and valid measures that address the educational objectives taught in the district. Students from preschool through grade 2 should be selected on the basis of such

criteria as teacher checklists, interviews with parents, and other developmentally appropriate measures.

For grades 3-12, standardized test scores should be used as one criteria to determine Title I eligibility. However, if other students at a given grade level are not administered standardized tests, an alternative indicator may be used. Students demonstrating the greatest amount of need, as determined by test scores and other selection criteria, must be given first priority in allocation of services. Other measures, such as teacher observation and classroom performance, should be considered in conjunction with MAP scores and standardized test scores to ensure that all students in need are identified and are placed in appropriate programs. The eligibility and programmatic needs of Title I students must be reevaluated each year.

Further information regarding Title I regulations are available from the Department's Federal Grants Management Section at (573) 751-3468.

STUDENTS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES

Districts need to have a variety of reading assessment tools available for teachers to use in identifying specific reading problems. These assessment tools should range from formal, standardized reading tests appropriate for various grade levels to informal checklists of reading behaviors and informal inventories of word analysis and comprehension skills. In addition, teachers should be provided training in how to conduct and to interpret the results of these assessments and in how to plan instructional strategies based on their interpretations.

AT-RISK STUDENTS

The school district must develop written procedures to identify students at risk of educational failure. In conjunction with community resources, the district will provide appropriate services to meet the needs of identified at-risk students and report school dropouts to the Missouri Literacy Hotline at (800) 521-7323.

MIGRATORY CHILDREN

The school district must systematically identify migratory children, ages 3 - 20, notify the director of the regional migrant center or the state director of their presence, and give full access to all programs and services provided to all other children.

HOMELESS CHILDREN

The district must identify and assesses the educational needs of all homeless children living in the district, in order to provide access to the school of their best interest and to develop policies and provide services that remove barriers to their education.

Glossary

Achievement test - A test that measures knowledge of acquired information and skill mastery, usually attained as a result of planned instruction or training.

Accommodations - Changes in test presentation or response requirements that are designed to provide all students with an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do. Accommodations do not substantively alter a test's content, level or performance criteria.

Accountability - Being held responsible for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a process, program, policy, or procedure; for producing specified results or desired outcomes.

Alternate Assessment - A way of gathering information on the performance and progress of students who are unable to participate in the assessments used with the majority of students.

Alternative assessment - See performance-based assessment.

Assessment - The process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information about academic performance related to educational goals. Assessments, as opposed to tests, typically employ a variety of procedures for evaluating student work and learning.

Baseline - Data obtained prior to educational intervention or programming, against which future measurements may be compared.

Benchmark - A specified step along a path toward achievement of a goal or standard.

Curriculum alignment - The agreement or match that exists among written curricular specifications, instructional practices and assessment procedures.

Curriculum-embedded tasks or tests - Assessment tools that are developed as part of the curriculum and integrated into instructional practice.

Curriculum frameworks - Guidelines and resources to use as tools in developing standards-referenced subject area or interdisciplinary curricula.

Diagnosis - Delineation of an individual's areas of strengths or deficiencies, used to suggest appropriate educational programs and/or services.

Disaggregated data - Data which has been grouped for analysis on the basis of one or more student variables such as sex, language, race, ethnicity, etc.

Exemption - Release from the assessment requirements to which most students are held.

High-stakes assessment - Assessment leading to decisions that have significant consequences for individuals or school systems.

Inclusion - The participation of students with disabilities with their non-disabled peers in programs and activities.

Individualized assessment - The use of a combination of assessment instruments and/or methods to determine the needs of an individual student and/or a student's eligibility for specific programs and services.

Knowledge (content) standards - The foundation of facts and basic skills in the traditional subject areas that students should learn by the time they graduate from high school.

Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) - One of several educational reforms mandated by the Outstanding Schools Act, the MAP is responsible for developing performance-based assessments that measure student achievement on the Show-Me Standards.

Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) - A Departmental monitoring program designed to promote excellence in the public schools of the state. MSIP teams periodically evaluate each district for classification and accreditation according to resources, process, and performance areas.

Modification - A substantive change in what a student is expected to demonstrate through assessment, such as changes in instructional level, content or performance criteria.

Norm-referenced test - A test in which student or group achievement is determined by comparison to a reference group of others who have taken the same test.

Outstanding Schools Act - Enacted by the Missouri Legislature in May 1993, the Outstanding Schools Act (also known as Senate Bill 380) established a variety of programs and policies designed to address the quality of Missouri's public schools and the inequity of the state funding system.

Percentile rank - A measure of relative standing that show the percent of scores in a given distribution that fall below a specified score.

Performance-based assessment: Sometimes referred to as alternative assessment, performance-based assessment often incorporates traditional test elements, but relies on multi-step exercises that require students to confront consequential issues and to design solutions to complex problems.

Performance (Process) standards - Interdisciplinary cognitive and communicative competencies that enable students to use their knowledge effectively.

Reliability - The extent to which a test is consistent in measuring whatever it measures or the degree to which the test is dependable, stable, and free of errors of measurement.

Scoring guides - Also called rubrics, scoring guides state the criteria that enable scorers to classify student responses to constructed responses or performance items in accord with the extent to which it meets a content or performance standard.

Screening - A procedure for looking at a total population of students to decide which students may need further assessment to determine their need and eligibility for special programs.

Show-Me Standards - Thirty-three knowledge (content) standards and 40 performance (process) standards adopted by Missouri's State Board of Education in 1996. The Show-Me standards define the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for students to advance through the public school system, graduate from high school, and to be adequately prepared for postsecondary education, the workplace and civic responsibilities.

Special population students - Students who may require special services and/or assistance to succeed in an education program. Special population students include non-traditional students, gifted students, students who are disabled or disadvantaged (economically or educationally), and those who are limited English proficient, criminal offenders, dropouts or potential dropouts, migrants, or foster children.

Validity - The extent to which a test measure what it is intended to measure.

Vocational aptitude battery - a test or series of tests by which a number of different abilities are assessed in order to identify vocational areas of relative potential strength.

Vocational interest inventory - an instrument through which an individual expresses his or her degree of preference for specific job activities, school subjects, hobbies, or sports in order to identify vocations he or she may find personally satisfying.